

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12
SSM-03 /084 W

-----044189 181554Z /53

O 181525Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4419
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 01990

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG IS XF
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN PRESS NOT OPTIMISTIC AS JERUSALEM
- MEETINGS BEGIN

SUMMARY: EGYPTIAN PRESS DOWNBEAT ON JERUSALEM, WITH
EDITORIALS PREDICTING PEACE NEGOTIATIONS IN BLIND ALLEY.
SETTLEMENTS REMAIN STICKING POINT; DISPUTE OVER AGENDA
SEEN TO PRESAGE OBSTACLES TO PEACE. KNOWLEDGEABLE
EGYPTIANS BELIEVE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS MOST CRITICAL
TO DATE AND LOOK TO U.S. TO SUPPORT THEIR POSITION.
SADAT REPORTEDLY FOLLOWING NEGOTIATIONS PERSONALLY, MAIN-
TAINING TELEPHONIC AND TELEGRAPHIC CONTACT WITH HIS
DELEGATION IN JERUSALEM. END SUMMARY.

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1. CAIRO DAILIES JAN 18 DEVOTE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO
OPENING OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING, BUT TONE IS
SOMBER AND DIFFICULTIES NOT MINIMIZED. AHRAM HEADLINES
"EGYPT AFFIRMS HER FIRM POSITION ON PEACE ISSUE", WHILE
AKHBAR MORE FRANKLY ADMITS "BASIC DIFFERENCES CONCERNING
WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIANS." GUMHURIYYA OPTIMISTICALLY
PREDICTS "ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRINCIPLES WITHIN DAYS", BUT

STORY HEDGES THIS BET BY NOTING THAT "UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS" MIGHT UNDERMINE ANNOUNCEMENT.

2. EDITORIALS ON OPENING SPEECHES (COVERED IN GREAT DETAIL ON INSIDE PAGES) UNIFORMLY NEGATIVE ON DAYAN'S REMARKS. AHRAH OPINES THAT THERE FLAW IN ISRAELI CHARACTER WHICH MAKES THEM FEEL SO MUCH CLEVERER THAN OTHER RACES THAT THEY PERSIST IN ARGUING THAT RIGHT IS WRONG AND THAT WRONG IS RIGHT. AHRAH NOTES THAT, DURING LONG PERIOD WHEN ARABS REJECTED ISRAEL, ISRAELIS SUCCEEDED IN "BRAINWASHING" WORLD INTO BELIEVING THAT ARABS "SAVAGES". AKHBAR GLOOMILY EDITORIALIZES THAT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY STUCK IN BLIND ALLEY, THAT ISRAELIS WASTING PRECIOUS TIME GAINED BY SADAT'S INITIATIVE ON "MANEUVERS" AND ON "ACCUSATIONS WHICH RENDER ATTAINMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE AND JUST PEACE MORE DIFFICULT." IN SEPARATE EDITORIAL, AKHBAR ASSAILS BEGIN'S COMMENTS TO VISITING CODEL ZABLOCKI THAT ANY ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER WHO GAVE UP SETTLEMENTS WOULD BE EXPELLED FROM OFFICE BUT THAT HE, BEGIN, WOULD PREFER TO RESIGN FIRST, RATHER THAN GIVE UP SETTLEMENTS. "OLD CONCEPTS WHICH CLASH WITH NEW ATMOSPHERE", ADMONISHES AKHBAR.

3. AHRAH, IN SECOND LEAD, ALSO DISPLAYS CONSIDERABLE DISSATISFACTION WITH ISRAELI TREATMENT OF AGENDA QUESTION, UNDER HEADLINE "SUSPICIOUS ISRAELI POSITION; ATTEMPT
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TO EVADE AGENDA AGREED UPON BY TWO SIDES." ISRAELIS ARE ACCUSED OF BOTH ATTEMPTING TO IGNORE ENGLISH TEXT OF AGENDA, REFERRING TO WEST BANK AND GAZA, WITH SUBSTITUTION OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA IN HEBREW, AND WORKING TO PLACE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, PROPOSED AT HEAD OF AGENDA, AT END OF DISCUSSIONS. AHRAH THUNDERS: "IT HAS BEEN CLEAR SINCE ISMAILIYA MEETINGS BEGAN, AS A RESULT OF PRES SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE, THAT ISRAELI LEADERS HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO PLACE OBSTACLES IN FRONT OF EVERY STEP ON ROAD TO PERMANENT PEACE AND TO AVOID FACING ESSENCE OF ME PROBLEM." WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, CONCLUDES AHRAH, AWARE THAT ISRAEL WILL BEAR RESPONSIBILITY IF CURRENT UNIQUE CHANCE TO ESTABLISH PEACE IS DESTROYED.

4. COMMENT: KNOWLEDGEABLE EGYPTIANS BELIEVE JERUSALEM NEGOTIATIONS ARE MOST CRITICAL TO DATE. THEY ARE PLEASED WITH U.S. ACTIVISM AS DEMONSTRATED BY SECRETARY VANCE IN RESOLVING AGENDA CRISIS AND HIS STATEMENTS IN JERUSALEM. THEY ALSO BELIEVE U.S. ATTENDANCE NECESSARY TO PREVENT EXTREMISM ON BOTH SIDES FROM COMING TO FORE. JUST BY BEING THERE BOTH SIDES ARE REMINDED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT U.S. ROLE AND THEY TEND TO TONE DOWN STATEMENTS

ACCORDINGLY. FINALLY, EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS BELIEVE THEY
HAVE STRONG LEGAL BASIS FOR MOST OF THEIR POSITIONS AND
THEY EXPECT TO BE APPEALING TO U.S. TO BACK THEM UP;
E.G., ILLEGALITY OF SETTLEMENTS. EGYPTIANS SEE NEXT
FEW WEEKS AS CRUCIAL AS INDICATOR OF WHETHER MOMENTUM IS
TO CONTINUE OR CAIRO CONFERENCE AVENUE BE BLOCKED.
PRIMARY OBJECTIVE PRESENTLY REMAINS GETTING STATEMENT OF
PRINCIPLES. AND IT IS PARTLY FOR THIS REASON THAT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 01990

PRESIDENT SSDAT HAS CANCELLED ALL APPOINTMENTS TO CONCENTRATE
ON NEGOTIATIONS (CAIRO 1822). HE HAS REPORTEDLY
ESTABLISHED A CONTROL CENTER AT THE GIZA RESIDENCE WHERE
HE MAINTAINS TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH
THE DELEGATION IN JERUSALEM AND A SPECIAL TASK FORCE HE
CREATED TO ASSIST HIM. EILTS

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TAGS: PEPR, MPOL, EG, IS, XF
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